

CROSS + GEN EDUCATION

LESSON
#3-1

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LIVING THE WORD

Narrative Lectionary



Exploring God's Story Together
CROSS + GEN EDUCATION

Leader's Guide

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Lesson #3-1

Creation and Fall

Genesis 2:4b-7, 15-17; 3:1-8



Key Verse:

They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden...and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

Genesis 3:8

The Point:

God loves us, even when we do the wrong thing.

Making Connections:

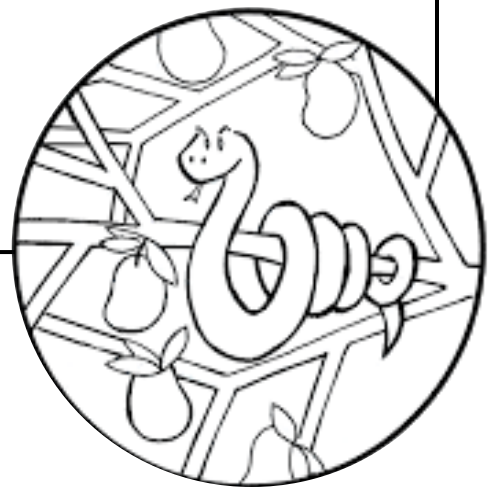
Promises Made, Promises Broken

Bible Nuts & Bolts:

What is the Bible?

Spiritual Practice:

Fellowship



Activities a la Carte

Activities

Supplies

Into the Story

How Does Your Garden Grow?

Plant bean seeds and talk about experiences with gardening.

10 min.

- † Groupings Guide
- † Materials for chosen cross+gen grouping
- † Paper cups
- † Potting soil
- † Bean seeds
- † Paper bowls
- † Small shovels or spoons
- † Pitchers of water

Bible Nuts and Bolts

What Is the Bible?

Scavenger hunt through the Bible.

10 min.

- † Bibles
- † Activity Sheet #3-1.A
- † Pencils
- † Timer

Making Connections

Broken Promises

Experience the effects of a broken promise.

10 min.

- † Yarn
- † Scissors

Learning the Story

The First Promise

Pantomime the story.

10 min.

- † Bible

Activities a la Carte

Living the Story

Trust Me!

Practice trust by following directions.

15 min.

- † Paper
- † Markers or crayons

Additional Activities

A Piece of Paradise

Explore what is growing on the property.

15 min.

- † None

Building Trust

Illustrate restoring trust in broken relationships.

10 min.

- † Paper
- † Markers or crayons
- † Pens or pencils

Sending the Story

5 min.

- † Bean plants from Into the Story



Cross+Generational Ministry has at its core the concept that faith is formed through meaningful relationships. When we connect with people of a different generation, we are able to learn from them and share our own experiences, no matter what age we are. We find our place in God's story best by exploring that story as community.

Effective cross+generational experiences are:

Experiential
Interactive
Engaging
Story-centered
Home-based
Equalizing

all of which promote an **encounter with God**. All of the activities included in this leader guide are intended to engage these principles, through intentional cross+generational interaction and active, creative activities that bring the Bible story to life in our lives.

We pass on the faith through every action, experience, or relationship that nurtures a transformative relationship of trust with God and shapes the way we see and interact with God's world. When we do this in meaningful, intergenerational relationships, our faith is enriched from the diversity of the experiences we share with each other. Our communities are strengthened, and we have confidence in our sense of belonging to God and with each other.

Background for Leaders

Making Connections

Today is the beginning of the new year for the Narrative Lectionary, and our first lesson in this cycle. We do not begin in chapter 1 of Genesis, with the extended tale of the creation of all that exists. Instead, we zoom in and focus on the creation of humanity, and the beginnings of humans' relationships with God and with the rest of creation.

Story Summary:

Creation and Fall

The Lord had created the heavens and the earth, and this reading opens with the origin of life for the first human being, created from the dust of the earth. It was this creature that the Lord trusted to care for the garden, to till it and make it grow. God established a relationship of trust with the human, and gave him great responsibility and freedom. Unfortunately, the temptation of the forbidden fruit, pointed out by the crafty serpent, was too much for the man and woman to resist—they broke God's one and only restriction.

This story serves within the larger narrative to establish a relationship between God and humanity, and to show clearly that this relationship was damaged by the humans' sin. It also reveals a question for both the original characters in the story, and for us: can we care for the creation that God has given us if we do not trust in God to care for us?

The first Israelite readers of this story learned that their relationship with God extended back to their creation, but it also reminded them that the broken relationship that they experienced due to their own fear-based sinfulness is not a new phenomenon.

The Point

God loves us, even when we do the wrong thing.

Our relationship with God is a constant dynamic, which requires us to be attentive to God's instruction, to recognize when we have strayed, to confess, and to allow ourselves to be enfolded back into God's promise. Today's story presents the consequences of damaging our relationship with God, and leaves us hanging without reconciliation. How can we rewrite the story for ourselves? When we sin as Adam and Eve did because of our fear and mistrust, we can always confess, and allow God's forgiveness to welcome us back into relationship.

Bible Nuts & Bolts:

What Is the Bible?

The Bible is a collection of stories, histories, and poems, written by many hands over a long period of time. Although the Bible speaks to each of us differently, depending on our contexts and experiences, it is fundamentally the story of God's love and relationship with all of creation throughout history and through many experiences.

Spiritual Practice: Fellowship

Fellowship between people is grounded in fellowship between each person and God. Our trust of God extends to our trust for each other, and allows us to care for and serve humanity and all of creation. When we practice putting our trust in one another, we can build relationships with others who can show us something about God that we had not known before.



Lesson Plan



Into the Story (10 minutes)

How Does Your Garden Grow?

Plant bean seeds and talk about experiences with gardening.

You will need:

- † Groupings Guide
- † Materials for chosen cross+generational grouping
- † Paper cups
- † Potting soil
- † Bean seeds
- † Paper bowls
- † Small shovels or spoons
- † Pitchers of water

Before class:

1. Determine how you would like to group participants at their tables (in a cross+generational grouping) using the Groupings Guide.
2. Prepare the materials indicated in the Groupings Guide.
3. Fill bowls with potting soil and place one on each table with a small shovel or spoon and a pitcher of water.
4. Place enough bean seeds and paper cups for each participant at each table.

During class:

1. Welcome the class and instruct them to group themselves cross+generationally according to the method you have selected from the Groupings Guide.
2. **If someone is sitting alone, please introduce yourself, and invite them to join you. Young children who are not comfortable leaving their families should sit at a table with someone in their family.**

3. As you begin sharing with the group at your table, each of you can plant a bean seed. Each person takes a paper cup, fills it to about one inch below the top. Press a hole about one inch into the soil, and drop your bean into it. Cover the bean with soil, and gently water it.
4. As you are planting, discuss the following questions with the group at your table. Remember to listen to everyone and give everyone a chance to tell their story.
 - Do you like to work in the garden?
 - Where is your favorite garden (home? church? community garden?)
 - What types of plants are your favorites to grow, or if you do not garden, what might you enjoy trying to grow?
 - How do you think that caring for a garden is like caring for each other? What types of things do both people and plants need?

Bible Nuts & Bolts (10 minutes)

What Is the Bible?

Scavenger hunt through the Bible.

You will need:

- † Bibles
- † Activity Sheet #3-1.A
- † Pens or pencils
- † Timer

Before class:

1. Make copies of Activity Sheet #3-1.A, one for each table or group.
2. Set out a stack of Bibles, one for each participant. Be sure all Bibles are the same translation.

During class:

1. Hand out pens or pencils and Activity Sheet #3-1.A, face down, to each table group. Encourage them to not turn the page over until you instruct them to do so.
2. Invite a member of each group to pick up Bibles for the members of their group.
3. Hold up a Bible. **What is this?** [*A Bible.*] **How many books is this?** Pause. **Is that a strange question? This Bible is not just one book, but a collection of books. We are going to do a scavenger hunt to learn more about the Bible, including just how many books are in it.**
4. **One person in your group needs to be the group recorder, and will write down your group's answers. Take a moment and choose that person.** Give groups a moment to make the decision. **Recorders, grab the pencil and keep the Activity Sheet face down in front of you until I tell you to turn it over.**
5. **The recorder will read each question, and everyone else in the group will search through their Bibles to find the answer. This is a timed challenge. You have five minutes to fill out the Activity Sheet. Let's see who can finish first with all of the correct answers. Ready? Pause for affirmation. Go!**
6. Set a timer for five minutes, and start the game.

7. After the timer goes off, review the answers and add additional information below. Congratulate teams that finished and give a special cheer for the one who finished first.
- **There are 39 books in the Old Testament. They are further divided into categories, or genres of writing, which we will talk more about later. There are 27 books in the New Testament, which tells the story of Jesus and the building of the church.**
 - **The Book of Psalms is found right in the middle of the Bible. It is made up of 150 songs of praise and lament, about half of which were written by King David.**
 - **Forty-one books are named after people. Some are written by the people after whom they are named. Others tell the story of their title character, and are written by other people. The books of Esther and Ruth tell the stories of women.**
 - **We just discussed the fact that the Book of Psalms includes 150 songs or poems. That could be considered the largest number of chapters. If you are counting non-poetic writing, the Book of Isaiah, with 66 chapters, is the longest.**
 - **The five books of the Torah are Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. The first one in the next section, called the Histories, is Joshua. The Old Testament also includes genres called Poetic/Wisdom Literature and Prophets. We will learn more about those another week.**
 - **The book of 2 John has the fewest verses, but there are five books that are only one chapter each!**
8. As you can see, the Bible is a collection of many different types of books, telling many different parts of God's story. But they have one thing in common—they all tell the story of God's love and relationship with God's people.



Making Connections (10 minutes)

Broken Promises

Experience the effects of a broken promise.

You will need:

- † Yarn
- † Scissors

During class:

1. **Have you ever made a promise to someone, only to break that promise? Or has anyone broken a promise to you? Why don't you take a moment to talk about that with your group?** Allow time for conversation.
2. **What was the effect of that broken promise? Did it change your relationship? Tell your group about it.** Allow time for conversation.
3. Decide if you would like to complete this activity as an entire group or in small groups. It is most effective with one group, but might be cumbersome with a group larger than 25 or 30. Instructions are written for one group. If you choose to do this as small groups, modify the instructions to fit your setting.
4. **We are going to do an activity that will give us a kinesthetic, or physical, sense of what happens when a relationship is broken. Everyone stand up and make one big circle. Stand close together, but not touching.**
5. The leaders should not be part of the circle. When everyone is in place, hand a ball of yarn to one person, and tell that person: **Holding the end of the yarn tight so you do not lose it, throw the ball to someone across the circle. As you throw, say your name, so we can learn each other's names.** After that is done: **Let's continue throwing the ball to someone across the circle, making sure we hold on to the end, so that everyone has a piece of the yarn. Make sure to throw to someone who is not near you, and say your name as you throw. We are going to make a web that connects us all together.**
6. If the yarn runs out, join a second ball to it by tying the ends together. Once the web is complete, have everyone pull tightly on their piece. **What happens when we pull?** *[It pulls someone else's piece, too.]* **What do you think would happen if I disconnected one of the pieces?** *[Answers will vary.]* **Everyone pull tightly, and let's see what happens.**

7. Cut one piece of yarn. Discuss what happens. Have everyone pull again, and cut a second and third time.
8. **When we cut the yarn we became disconnected. Everyone's yarn shifted a little, even if the cut was not in their section. Something like this happens when we break promises. It affects relationships with not only person directly affected, but with the entire community. In today's story, we will learn about a broken promise, and how it affects relationships.**

Learning the Story (10 minutes)

The First Promise

Pantomime the story.

You will need:

† Bible

During class:

1. **We are going to listen to today's story with our entire bodies. As we hear the story, we will each pantomime a part of it. There are a number of characters in this story, so in your small groups, select people to play each of these characters: the Man, the LORD, the Woman, the Serpent, and everyone else can be the trees. Each group will do their own pantomime together as they hear the story.**
2. Read Genesis 2:4b-7, 15-17; 3:1-8 slowly and dramatically.
3. Afterward: **Good job, everyone! Have a seat and spend a few minutes discussing the following questions:**
 - **When did God create the first human?** [*After the heavens and earth were created, but before anything began growing.*]
 - **Why did God put the human in the garden?** [*To care for it.*]
 - **What did the serpent say to the woman? Why do you think he started that conversation with her?** [*The serpent told her that she wouldn't actually die if she ate the forbidden fruit. Answers may vary for the second question.*]
 - **What did the man and woman do when they heard the Lord coming? Why did they do that?** [*They hid because they knew they had done the wrong thing, and they were ashamed of their nakedness.*]
 - **How do you think their actions changed their relationship with the Lord?** [*Answers will vary.*]
 - **What was it like to be the character you played?** Allow each person to answer this question.
4. **God created humans to be in relationship with each other and with God. But, the humans did not trust God, and chose to trust the serpent instead. Sometimes we, too, trust voices other than God's, and we break God's trust. The good news is that God gives us so many chances to renew our promises. This year, we will hear of stories about promises the God and God's people make to each other.**

Living the Story (15 minutes)

Trust Me!

Practice trust by following directions.

You will need:

- † Paper
- † Markers or crayons

Before class:

1. Write the word “Tree” in large letters on a piece of paper. Write “Person” on a second piece of paper.
2. Set out paper and crayons or markers at each table.

During class:

1. **We just learned in today’s story that the first two humans made a choice to trust the deceptive serpent, rather than trust the Lord, who made them. We sometimes do the same, but God continues to welcome us back into relationship. Our relationship with and trust for God is played out every day in our relationships with other people. We must learn to trust each other so we can also learn to trust God.**
2. **Let’s do an activity that will give us practice in trusting each other. Everyone needs to choose a partner. Try to pick someone from a different generation. Younger people, try to find someone around your parents’ or grandparents’ age. Older people, find someone who could be your child or grandchild. Sit together at any table.**
3. Allow time for people to find partners and sit down. Offer assistance to anyone who seems to need help finding a partner.
4. **This activity is simple. You are each going to draw a picture. Pause. Easy, right? What makes it more difficult is that the person drawing will have their eyes closed and will not know what they are drawing. Their partner knows what they should draw, and will need to describe it to them...without telling them what it is! When the first picture is finished, you will switch roles and the other partner will draw something different.**
5. **Take a moment to decide who will draw first and who will describe. Then each artist should place a piece of paper and marker or crayon in front of themselves.**

6. **Artists, close your eyes. Partners, describe to your partners how to draw THIS.** Hold up the paper that says “Tree.” **You have five minutes to get your partner to draw this. Go!**
7. After five minutes: **Okay artists, open your eyes. What do you see?** Allow all answers. **Can you recognize what your partner described?**
8. **Now it is time to switch. New artists, get a piece of paper and pencil, and close your eyes. New partners, describe to your partners how to draw this.** Hold up the paper that says “Person.” **You have five minutes to get your partner to draw THIS. Go!**
9. **After five minutes: Okay artists, open your eyes. What do you see?** Allow all answers. **Can you recognize what your partner described?**
10. Lead a brief discussion based on the following questions:
 - **What did it feel like to not know what you were doing and to rely on someone else to tell you?**
 - **What did it feel like to be responsible for someone else’s work?**
 - **How can you build trust with your families and friends this week?**

Additional Activities

A Piece of Paradise! (15 minutes)

Explore what is growing on the property.

You will need:

† None

During class:

1. **Our story today tells us that God first created the earth, then humanity, and then caused things to grow. God placed the humans in the garden to care for it and cultivate it. We are responsible to care for the creation that surrounds us, too.**
2. **Have you ever noticed what is growing right around this building? Now is your chance to look more closely and see what is surrounding us. As small groups, take the next ten minutes to walk around the outside of the building.** In case of inclement weather they can walk around the inside of the building and look out the windows. **Notice what is growing, wild or cultivated. Discuss amongst yourselves if there is anything you think can be done to better care for what is growing, or to grow something that is not already there.**
3. When all return, have a brief conversation about what they noticed. If any groups came up with improvement ideas, encourage them to take these ideas to those in leadership.

Building Trust (10 minutes)

Illustrate restoring trust in broken relationships.

You will need:

- † Paper
- † Markers or crayons
- † Pens or pencils

Before class:

1. Set out paper, pencils or pens, and crayons or markers at each table.

During class:

1. **If you remember back to one of the first activities we did today, we talked about our experiences of broken promises or broken trust before we created the yarn web. In this activity, we will work on how we can repair broken trust. We are going to either write a letter or draw a picture that depicts the broken trust and our attempt to repair it.**
2. **The first important step to repairing trust is to confess. A confession is when you admit to what you have done wrong and apologize for it.**
3. **Think again of the experience you thought about before. If you were the one who broke the trust, start out by admitting it and apologizing. If you cannot think of an example in which you did this, you can write or draw about today's story or an example of a time in which you broke God's trust. After you admit and apologize, write or draw about what you can do to be in relationship with God or the other person again.**
4. **You can choose to send this confession to the person you wronged, or to keep it yourself as a reminder of our need to confess and be forgiven.**

Sending the Story (5 minutes)

If your congregation is using the “Living the Word: Sharing God’s Story @ Home” insert, remember to hand them out at this point in the lesson.

Have participants pick up the bean plant that they planted at the beginning of the lesson, and place it at their feet in their circle.

Encourage participants to hold hands with those in their group, or in a large circle if the entire group is small enough. Begin and end the prayer, but leave enough silence in the middle for people to participate.

Prayer

Before ending class, make a point to come together to pray. Use the following or say your own prayer.

Loving God,

Thank you for the amazing glory of your creation. Thank you for creating us to care for the earth and for each other. We are sorry for the times that we have broken trust with you or each other. Invite participants to add their confessions here. Please restore our relationships, and make us whole again. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

And now, pick up your bean plants and hold them up. Lord, God, bless these bean plants that they may grow and flourish. Use them to remind us to care for all that you have created, with the same love that you show us. Amen.

What Is the Bible?

Scavenger hunt through the Bible.

Find your Bible's table of contents.

How many different books are there in the first section (the Old Testament or the Hebrew Scriptures)? _____

How many are in the second section? (The New Testament)?

Open your Bible exactly to the middle. What book is in the middle?

How many books are named after specific people (not Judges or Kings, for example)?

Which two books are named after women? _____

Which book of the Bible has the most chapters? _____

The Old Testament is divided into sections. The first five books are the Torah, or Books of Moses. What is the first book after the Torah? _____

What is the shortest book of the Bible (according to the number of verses)?
